

Population Health Profile 2022



Zone 3

Fredericton and River Valley Area



New Brunswick
Health Council

Conseil de la santé
du Nouveau-Brunswick



About the New Brunswick Health Council

The New Brunswick Health Council (NBHC) has a two-part mandate: engaging citizens in ongoing dialogue about the improvement of health service quality in the province, and measuring, monitoring and publicly reporting on health service quality and population health. Together, these two streams of activity contribute to greater accountability, improved health system performance, population health outcomes and promotion of a more citizen-centered health care system.

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Profil de santé de la population 2022 – Zone 3 : Région de Fredericton et de la vallée

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What is a Population Health Profile?

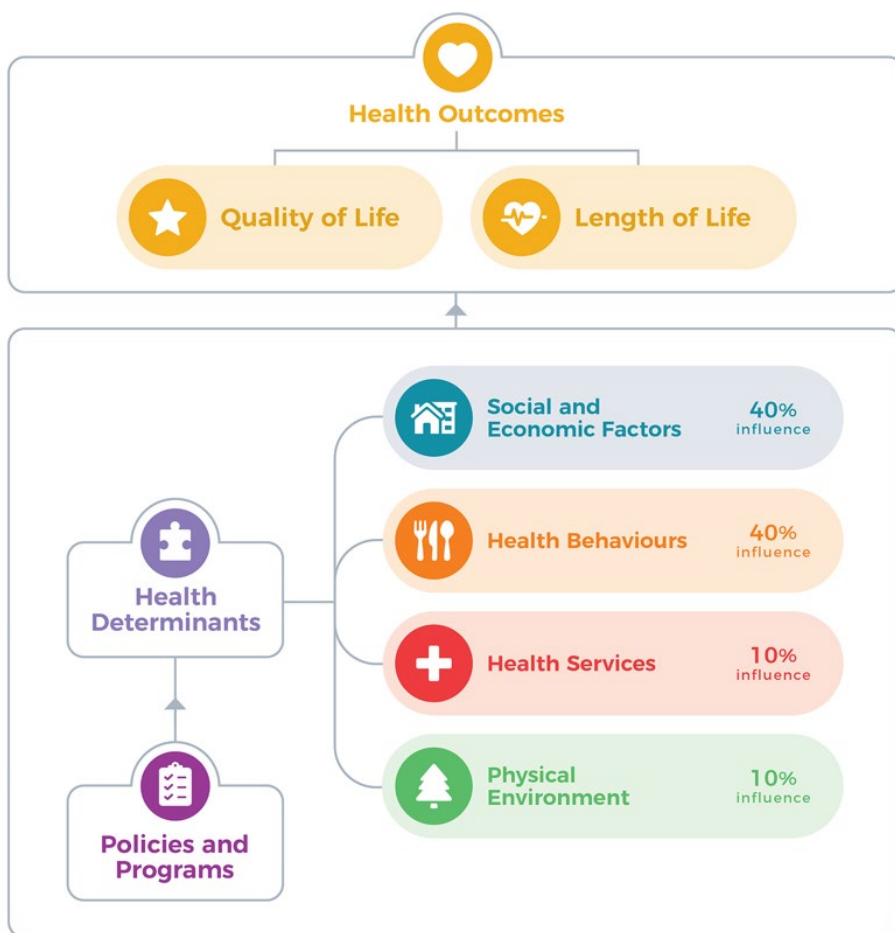
The New Brunswick Health Council's (NBHC) *Population Health Profile* provides an overview of the health and well-being of people who live, learn, work and take part in activities in each community of our province. This tool is designed to help citizens and decision-makers develop a shared understanding of the unique realities lived in each community and can be used to foster collaboration toward a common vision of informed, engaged, and healthier New Brunswickers.

Each profile was created by analyzing information from more than 400 population health indicators, available in the *Population Health Data Tables* on the [NBHC website](#). The information included helps us understand how healthy the citizens in our communities are today (health outcomes) and what factors influences their health and well-being (health determinants).

The Population Health Model

The *Population Health Profile* is based on a *Population Health Model*. This model groups the determinants of health into four categories: health behaviours, health services, social and economic factors, and the physical environment. Each category can be influenced by our individual decisions about our health and well-being, external factors that influence the health of the population, and government programs and policies.

Together, these determinants impact New Brunswickers' health outcomes: our quality and length of life.





About the Data and Geography

Indicators from a variety of sources are collected, organized, and analyzed by the NBHC. Each has various levels of reliability and limitations as detailed in the specific indicator web page on the [NBHC website](#). The complete list of indicators used in this profile can be found at the end of the document.

Population Health Profiles are available for each of the 7 Health Zones and 33 NBHC Communities. The boundaries of the seven health zones were established by provincial legislation, while the 33 communities were created by the NBHC in 2009 (by further dividing up the seven established health zones). The community boundaries were determined on the basis of the catchment areas of health care centres, community health centres and hospitals. No community has fewer than 5,000 people to ensure data availability, stability, and anonymity.

To learn more about the 33 NBHC Communities, click [here](#).



Key observations for the Zone 3 - Fredericton and River Valley Area

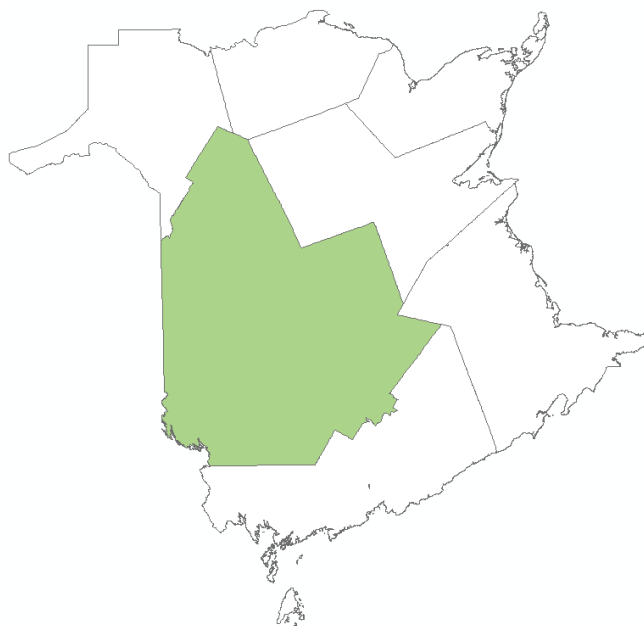
- This zone has a relatively diverse population.
- Although adults and seniors are the most optimistic about their health, they feel the most isolated.
- The education level of residents is generally high, and the median household income is one of the highest in New Brunswick.
- The residents of this zone are the least satisfied with the health services received.



Health of the Zone

Demographic Context

- Area: 23,211 km²
- Population density: 8 persons per km²



The Fredericton and River Valley Area is the largest in the province in terms of land area. The population grew by 5% between 2016 and 2020, a growth rate that is higher than the provincial average. The birth rate here (ten per 1,000 population) is the highest of the seven zones, while its death rate (nine per 1,000 population) is the second lowest in the province. The median age, at 43 years, is the youngest of the seven New Brunswick health zones.

The percentage of Fredericton and River Valley Area residents who identify as Indigenous (4.8%) is slightly higher than the provincial average. The zone has the largest immigrant population of any of the seven health zones (6.4%); it also has the highest percentage of immigrants who arrived between 2011 and 2016 (1.8%). It also has the highest percentage of visible minority residents (4.5%) and of youth who identify as a member of a sexual minority (18.3%). This zone has the smallest percentage of people who live alone (27%) and of dependents aged 65 and over (19%). It is also home to the highest percentage of dependents under the age of 20 (21%).

Residents of this zone who request health services in English receive them in their language of choice 98% of the time. Conversely, residents who request health services in French receive them in their language of choice only 24% of the time, the lowest percentage of all seven New Brunswick health zones. About one third of youth in this zone (36%) are bilingual, the lowest proportion in the province.



Health Outcomes

The Fredericton and River Valley Area has the highest percentage of adults (47%) and seniors (29%) who rated their health as very good or excellent. However, one quarter of adults are affected by loneliness, the highest percentage of the seven health zones in the province. In addition, fewer than four in five youths reported they are satisfied with life (79%), the lowest proportion in the province for that age group, tied with Zone 2.

The Fredericton and River Valley Area stand out from the rest of the province in terms of the rate of years of life lost due to cancer, which is the lowest of all seven zones for that disease (153 per 10,000 population). It also has the smallest percentage of low-birth-weight babies (5%).



Determinants of Health

Social and economic factors

This zone has the highest percentage of children who are school-ready for kindergarten (92%) and the highest proportion of youth with above average or excellent academic performance (67%). Its residents generally have higher-than-average levels of education. Only one in ten residents do not have a high school diploma (or equivalent), while six in ten residents have a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree.



The Fredericton and River Valley Area has the highest percentage (tied with Zone 2) of people who work full-year and full-time (53%). It also has a higher-than-average labour force participation rate (63%) and employment rate (57%). This zone also has the smallest percentage of students with part-time jobs outside school hours (29%).

Only 13% of renters live in subsidized housing and 4% of the population receives Employment Insurance benefits, the lowest proportion of any New Brunswick health zone. Household incomes in the Fredericton and River Valley Area are among the highest in the province (see Table 1).

Table 1. Household Incomes in the Fredericton and River Valley Area

	Zone 3	NB
Less than \$25,000 (%)	10	17
\$25,000 to \$59,999 (%)	33	34
\$60,000 and more (%)	52	49
Median household income (\$)	62196	59313
Median household income per household habitant(\$)	27042	25788
Median lone-parent family income(\$)	31042	28763



Adults and seniors in the Fredericton and River Valley Area have the lowest levels of social and family supports in the province. This zone also has highest percentages of residents in both those age groups who reported they sometimes or often feel a lack of companionship (40%), social exclusion (34%) or social isolation (37%).

Some aspects of the social and family support for youth are better than average. More specifically speaking, half of youth reported they like their family or cultural traditions, and 47% of youth reported there are people they greatly admire. Youth in the Fredericton and River Valley Area, however, have a sense of connection with their school that is one of the province's least favourable, in some respects. Of note is the fact that not many youth (54%) said their mental fitness needs are highly satisfied by their school.

Physical environment

The Fredericton and River Valley Area has one of the highest percentages of adults and seniors who walk or bike to work (5%). In addition, three quarters of residents live near a park and 81% of residents participate in outdoor activities near their home, the highest percentage in the province.

Of the areas for which this data is available, the Fredericton and River Valley Area has the smallest percentage of households with a municipal water supply (42%). It also experienced relatively high levels of extreme weather during the period under consideration, namely three extreme heat events and nine extreme cold days. In addition, there were 13 boil water orders during the same period, the highest number in the province.



Health Behaviours

The health behaviours of Zone 3 residents are generally good. A higher-than-average percentage of adults and seniors eat at least five servings of fruit or vegetables each day (44%). Only 12% of youth had eaten at a fastfood restaurant at least three times in the previous seven days, which is the lowest proportion in the province. In terms of physical activity, 20% of youth and 55% of adults get the recommended amount of moderate or vigorous physical activity.



This area has the smallest percentages of youth (12%), adults (27%) and seniors (10%) who drink heavily. However, one in ten adults or seniors use cannabis, the highest proportion in the province.

And the chlamydia rate is higher than the provincial average, among youth (148 cases per 10,000 population aged 15 to 19) and in the general population (36 cases per 10,000 population).



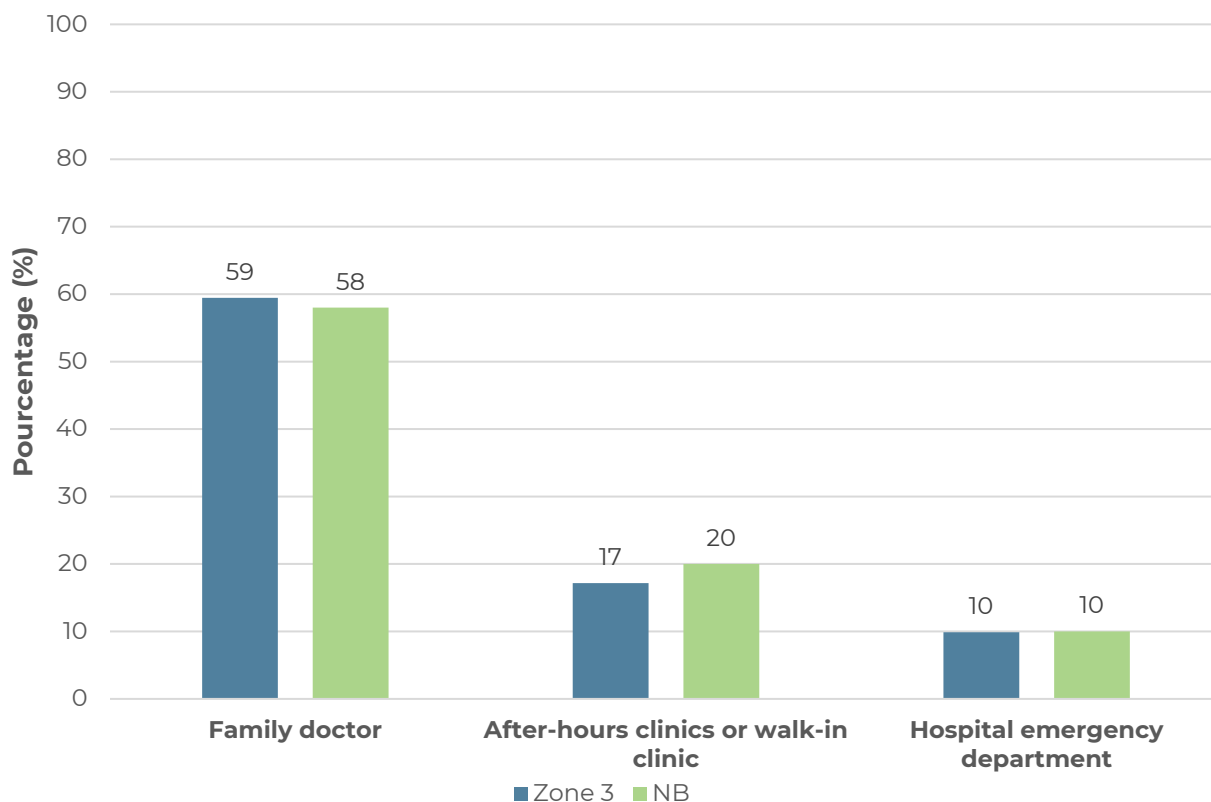
Health Services

Only 80% of Fredericton and River Valley Area residents reported they have a family doctor, which is the lowest proportion in any of the health zones. Despite this, timely access to a family doctor is slightly higher than the provincial average. More than half of adults (53%) and seniors (62%) reported being able to get an appointment with their family physician within five days. Similarly, access to emergency services is better than in most of New Brunswick's health zones: seven in ten residents reported they waited less than four hours to access emergency services.

When ill or in need of care services, residents in this zone turned to the available services in proportions similar to those of the province as a whole (see Figure 1). This zone also has the smallest proportions of residents who used after-hours or walk-in clinics (28%) and a hospital emergency room (34%). And as compared to provincial averages, it also has the smallest number of residents who were admitted to hospital (8%), saw a specialist for the first time (16%), and received home care services (4%).



Figure 1. Types of Services Most Often Used When Care Services are Needed in Zone 3: Fredericton and River Valley Area



Seventeen percent of adults reported having felt the need to consult a health professional about their mental health, emotional health or substance use, while 16% consulted a professional about those concerns; both figures are comparable to the numbers for the province as a whole. The figure for youth is above the provincial average, with almost one third having reported they had felt the need to consult someone about an emotional or mental health problem (32%).

When it comes to barriers to health services, residents of this zone are less likely to report financial barriers. And in terms of communicating with a health professional, language barriers are also very rare (3%).

The Fredericton and River Valley Area stand out in terms of the percentage of residents who reported being very confident about their ability to manage their health (43%). This zone also ranks just behind Zone 2 (Fundy Shore and Saint John Area) as having the highest percentage of adults who said they know the effects of their medications (55%).



The vast majority of residents said that verbal information related to their condition or prescriptions is easy to understand (92%), and very few find written information difficult to understand (11%). Residents also reported they have very good experiences with their family doctor, including the fact that he or she always explains things in a way they can understand (76%), there is enough time to talk (68%), and they feel consulted in the decision-making process related to their health (76%).

However, when it comes to rating the health services received, this zone is the least satisfied of any New Brunswick health zone. Only 61% of residents gave the health services they received a positive rating.



Conclusion

Briefly put, the Fredericton and River Valley Area has experienced above average recent population growth and has a younger population than any other health zone in the province. This zone has a relatively high level of diversity, including people who identify as Indigenous, newcomers, visible minorities and youth who identify as a member of a sexual minority.

Adults and seniors in this zone have a better-than-average perception of their health. However, residents in both age groups are the loneliest and have fewer social and family supports. In addition, youth have lower life satisfaction than youth in other New Brunswick health zones, but their social and family supports are better, in some respects.

Residents of the Fredericton and River Valley Area generally have higher-than-average levels of education. In addition, the median household income is one of the highest in New Brunswick. Health-related behaviours are relatively good, especially with respect to physical activity and heavy drinking.

In terms of access to health care, the Fredericton and River Valley Area has the smallest number of residents who have a family doctor. However, wait times for getting an appointment with a family doctor and to access emergency services are better than average. Residents of this zone are more confident about managing their own health than the provincial average, and generally have a good understanding of information related to their medications and health. However, the Fredericton and River Valley Area is the zone where residents are the least satisfied with the health services they received.



Source

Detailed information for each indicator used for these observations is available on the New Brunswick Health Council website. The list of indicators, their unique code and the year of dissemination are available (Table 2) to facilitate this research.

It is important to note that the indicators are continuously updated on the NBHC website.

[Health Zone 3 | New Brunswick Health Council \(nbhc.ca\)](https://nbhc.ca)

Table 2. Indicator, unique code and year of dissemination		
Indicator	Unique Code	Year
Demographic context		
Land area	STATC-CENCU-001	2016
Population density	STATC-CENCU-002	2016
Population change from 2016 to 2020	STATC-SCCEN-024	2016 to 2020
Indigenous	STATC-SCCEN-023	2016
Immigrant	STATC-SCCEN-009	2016
Recent immigrant from 2011 to 2016	STATC-SCCEN-010	2016
Visible minority	STATC-SCCEN-022	2016
Median age of population	STATC-SCCEN-002	2016
Birth rate	SNB-VITST-002	2014 to 2018
Death rate	SNB-VITST-001	2014 to 2018
Person living alone	STATC-SCCEN-008	2016
Dependency ratio - Dependent under 20 years	STATC-ADECP-002	2019
Dependency ratio - Dependent 65 years and over	STATC-ADECP-003	2019
Youth bilingualism - English and French	STATC-SCCEN-001	2016
Always receive health care services in the official language of their choice - English	PH_LOS03_2	2020
Always receive health care services in the official language of their choice - French	PH_LOS03_3	2020
Youth - sexual minority	SH_SEO02_7	2018-2019
Health outcomes		
Infants - low birth weight	SNB-VITST-003	2016 to 2018
Youth - Life satisfaction	SH_LIF01_7	2018-2019
Adults - Perceived health, very good or excellent	PH_HEP01_1	2020
Adults - Lonely (based on loneliness score)	PH_SIL04_1	2020



Seniors - Perceived health, very good or excellent	PH_HEP01_1	2020
0 to 19 years old - Cancer, years of life lost	SNB-VITST-012	2014 to 2018
Social and economic factors		
Youth - enjoy my cultural and family traditions	SH_RES12_1	2018-2019
Youth - have people I look up to	SH_RES05_1	2018-2019
Adults and seniors - lack companionship some of the time or often	PH_SIL01_1	2020
Adults and seniors - feel left out some of the time or often	PH_SIL02_1	2020
Adults and seniors - feel isolated some of the time or often	PH_SIL03_1	2020
Youth - with mental fitness needs highly satisfied by school	SH_MEFSC_1	2018-2019
Kindergarten school readiness	GNB-EESC-004	2018-2019
Youth - school marks above average or excellent (80% or more)	SH_ACA01_1	2018-2019
Highest level completed of education - less than high school	STATC-SCCEN-037	2016
Highest level completed of education - postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree	STATC-SCCEN-039	2016
Participation rate	STATC-SCCEN-040	2016
Employment rate	STATC-SCCEN-041	2016
Work a full year, full time	STATC-SCCEN-051	2016
Students with part-time jobs outside of school	SH_JOB01_1	2018-2019
Household income - less than \$25,000	STATC-SCCEN-056	2016
Household income - \$25,000 to \$59,999	STATC-SCCEN-057	2016
Household income - \$60,000 and more	STATC-SCCEN-058	2016
Median household income	STATC-SCCEN-053	2016
Physical environment		
Adults and seniors - walk or bike to get to work	STATC-SCCEN-033	2016
Have a park close to home	STATC-HENVS-005	2017
Participate in outdoor activities close to home	STATC-HENVS-008	2017
Extreme heat events	CCCS-DCLIM-001	2020
Extreme cold days	CCCS-DCLIM-002	2020
Municipal drinking water supply	STATC-HENVS-009	2017
Number of boil orders	GNB-OCMOH-001	2020
Health behaviours		
Youth - Ate at a fast food place or restaurant 3 times or more in the last 7 days	SH_EAT13_2	2018-2019
Adults and seniors - Eat 5 or more servings of vegetables or fruit daily	PH_EAT03_1	2020
Youth - Moderate or vigorous physical activity	SH_PHY01_1	2018-2019
Adults - Moderate or vigorous physical activity	PH_PHY01_1	2020
Youth - Heavy drinking	SH_ALC04_1	2018-2019
Adults - Heavy drinking	PH_ALC01_3	2020
Seniors - Heavy drinking	PH_ALC01_3	2020
Cannabis use - adults and seniors	PH_MAR01_2	2020



Youth - Sexually transmitted infections - chlamydia	GNB-OCMOHR-001	2019
Sexually transmitted infections - chlamydia	GNB-OCMOHR-002	2019
Health Services		
Have a family doctor	PH_ACCFA_1	2020
After-hours clinic or walk-in clinic	PH_USECA_1	2020
Hospital emergency department	PH_USEEA_1	2020
Admitted to a hospital	PH_USEOD_1	2020
Seen a specialist for the first time	PH_USEST_1	2020
Received home care services, with the cost being covered by the government	PH_USEAA_1	2020
Youth - needed to see or talk to someone for a mental or emotional problem	SH_MHI01_1	2018-2019
Financial barrier in getting the health care they needed	PH_BARFI_1	2020
Skipped dental care because of costs	PH_BARSD_1	2020
Skipped a medical test, treatment or other because of the cost	PH_BARSM_1	2020
Adults - Family doctor - waited 5 days or less to have an appointment	PH_ACCFD_2	2020
Seniors - Family doctor - waited 5 days or less to have an appointment	PH_ACCFD_2	2020
Hospital emergency department - waited less than 4 hours	PH_ACCEA_1	2020
Adults - very confident in managing their health condition	PH_MGT01_1	2020
Family doctor - always explains things in a way that they can understand	PH_COMFA_1	2020
Family doctor - always gives them enough time to discuss	PH_APPFB_1	2020
Family doctor - always involves them in decisions about their health care	PH_APPFA_1	2020
Verbal information about condition/prescription is easy to understand, always or usually	PH_COMOA_1	2020
Adults - Written information about condition/prescription is hard to understand, always or usually	PH_LIT01_1	2020
Know what their prescribed medications do, strongly agree	PH_MED02_1	2020
Citizens - provide a favourable rating for overall health care services received	PH_SATOA_1	2020

